

INFORMATION LINK

Information Services Division

July 1999

A source of information for our customers

Volume 99, Issue 3

Development/Software Services

APPLICATION SERVER IS IMPLEMENTED

Vern Welder

Information Services Division (ISD) has implemented the SilverStream application server. Silverstream provides the capability to develop applications that use a web browser as the client interface to processes that access databases. The web browser interface can be HTML for universal use by any brand or version of browser, or it can be java for applications where a specific browser can be required.

We will offer two types of application server services. The first is our traditional service where ISD develops, administers, and runs the entire application for the customer. The second is a "develop-it-yourself" service which makes it affordable for ISD customers to develop their own applications.

The "develop-it-yourself" service provides access to centrally managed test and production application servers. As customers develop their applications, they will present their analysis, design, and pre-implementation specifications to ISD developers at the completion of each development phase. Our developers will conduct a constructive review of those specifications and provide suggestions for improvement if needed. This peer review process is part of our current development methodology and is our assurance that we develop quality applications for our customers. When an application is ready for production use, it will be transferred from the test application server to the production application server.

Pricing for all application server services is still pending. ISD's goal is to provide an affordable service that customers will want to use in lieu of administering their own application servers.

For more information on application server services, please contact me at 328-4302 or vwelder@state.nd.us.

Administrative Services

Y2K PRODUCT TESTING

Larry Lee

Information Services Division has started its internal Year 2000 product testing. Several LAN and mainframe products have been tested and many more are scheduled to be tested throughout June. The tests cover the following critical time periods:

- ✓ December 31, 1999 - January 1, 2000
- ✓ February 28, 2000 - February 29, 2000
- ✓ February 29, 2000 - March 1, 2000
- ✓ December 30, 2000 - December 31, 2000 (365th to 366th day of the year)
- ✓ December 31, 2000 - January 1, 2001 (366th day to 1st day of 2001)

ISD will share the results of these tests with the Year 2000 project managers at the monthly meetings once the tests are completed.

Information Technology

A CHALLENGING OPPORTUNITY

Jim Heck, Chief Information Officer

Information Services Division has a major challenge ahead of it. Effective August 1, 1999, the Information Services Division will become a department with a Chief Information Officer appointed by the Governor. This cabinet level position reflects the increasing importance technology contributes to the operation of state government.

I have chosen to not participate in this new challenge. I will be retiring from my position effective June 30, 1999. It is time to move on. I want to spend more time with family and friends, and traveling.

Thanks to all the state agency technology coordinators for making my job easy. I know there was not always agreement on our direction and policies, yet I felt I had your support. I want to express my most sincere appreciation to the employees of the Information Services Division. Their professional attitude and work has resulted in the excellent organization we have today. Their dedication to customer service has been key in carrying out our mission.

Thanks for a great career.

NEW BILLING RATES EFFECTIVE JULY 1999

Dan Sipes

In July 1999, the new billing rates will go into effect. There are rate changes in each service area. The new rates can be found on the ISD web site (<http://www.state.nd.us/isd>). Selecting the Billing Rates link from the ISD home page will take you the billing rates index. From there, you select the Budget Guidelines for 1999-2001 Biennium link to find the new billing rates for each service area. Rate changes in each schedule are shown in bold text. If you have any questions, contact me at 328-4317.

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TECHNOLOGY PLANNING

Nancy Walz

Information Services Division (ISD) established the following goals with respect to the information technology (IT) planning process.

The IT plan should:

- ✓ Provide a useful planning tool for agencies
- ✓ Provide critical budget information
- ✓ Provide enterprise planning information
- ✓ Provide standards compliance information

The guidelines for developing your agency's IT plan will be substantially different than last time. ISD is rewriting the guidelines to include new legislative requirements to tie the IT plan more closely to the agency's budget. The hardware, software, and contract schedules will most likely be eliminated. Instead, agencies will be asked to describe their IT architecture and list technology assets. They will also be asked to describe their staffing plan for the support and implementation of technology. This information will be due January 15, 2000 in the strategic portion of the plan. Budget information related to activities planned by the agency will be due at the same time as the agency budget, July 2000.

Following are some key milestones in the IT planning process. ISD will be asking for agency input as the planning guidelines are developed during the summer. Their insight will be helpful in developing a format which is useful as a strategic planning tool at the agency level and also provides the data necessary for planning at the state level.

Proposed IT Planning Schedule 1999-2000

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
Identify data to be collected	May - July 1999
Identify SAMIS/SIBR IT object codes	May 1999
Implement SAMIS IT object codes	July 1999
Design forms / application	July 1999
Present guidelines to legislative committee	August 1999
Issue new guidelines	September 1999
Train agency staff	September 1999
Develop / implement on-line reporting application	August 1999
IT plans due (strategic portion)	January 2000
Review IT plans	April 2000
Training session IT budgets	April 2000
IT plan budget due	July 2000
Review IT budgets	October 2000
IT statewide plan complete	November 2000

The ISD planning staff will be offering their services to agencies who require help in the planning process. ISD will work with an agency on an individual basis and identify how best to meet their needs. This could take the form of facilitating a strategy session or identifying future technologies and their impact on the business processes of the agency. If you are interested in more information, please contact me at 328-1991.



ISD EMPLOYEE PROFILE

Name: Lyle Ripplinger

Job Title: Programmer/Analyst II

Section of ISD: Application Development

Job Responsibilities: To provide a quality application to the customer through the use of COOL:GEN, Lotus Notes, and SNAP (Object Model: Rule Based Knowledge).

Years at ISD: 7 years - June 1999

Telecommunication Services

DON'T HANG UP—SAY “GO AHEAD”

Terese Birnbaum

It has been brought to my attention that people are hanging up or do not understand what to do when they receive a call from the North Dakota Relay Service.

The North Dakota Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS), which was mandated in 1993 by the state legislature, enables people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or unable to speak to make and receive calls from voice (hearing) telephone users. People who are unable to hear or speak use the relay service which creates a link between an individual using a text telephone device (TTY), which looks like a typewriter or small computer, and a non-TTY user.

Operators called communication assistants relay conversations between a TTY user and a telephone user by speaking everything typed by the TTY user and typing everything said by the telephone user. People who are hard of hearing can use the relay by speaking their own conversation and having the hearing person's conversation typed to them. In this way, people who require special equipment to communicate over a telephone system can participate in interactive conversations with those who do not have the same equipment. North Dakota TRS eliminates barriers and opens the lines of communication to all North Dakota residents.

To access the relay, voice users call toll free 1-800-366-6889 and TTY users call 1-800-366-6888. The relay is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and there is no charge to use the service, within your local calling area. However, long distance calls made through Relay North Dakota will be billed at a reduced rate. This discount is given to compensate for the additional

time needed to place a relay call.

When receiving a call from Relay North Dakota this is what you will hear: "Hello. A person is calling you through Relay North Dakota. This is Agent or (Communication Assistant) XXXX. Have you received a relay call before?" If yes, "One moment please for your call to begin." If you indicate that you have not received a relay call before, you will hear, "The person on the line is using the relay service to communicate with you. The caller is typing their conversation, which will be read to you. When you hear the words 'Go Ahead,' it will be your turn to speak. Speak directly to the caller. Everything that is heard will be typed to them. One moment for your call to begin."

You may also hear the following:

- ⇒ "The person who is calling will be speaking directly to you. When he/she says the phrase, 'Go Ahead,' that indicates that they are done speaking and are ready for you to respond. When you talk, the agent will be typing everything heard back to the caller. One moment for your call to begin."
- ⇒ "The person who is calling you can hear but does not speak. You will be able to speak directly to the caller and they will be able to hear your message. When you are finished speaking, please say the words 'Go Ahead' and that will inform the caller that it is their turn to respond. They will type their response, which will be read to you. One moment for your call to begin."

The North Dakota Relay System plays a large part in the lives of hundreds of North Dakota residents. Relay connects all people of North Dakota allowing telephone communication to take place for both business and personal calls. In this high-tech age, the message of relay is really quite simple and is a wonderful way to use technology to connect people. So in the future when you receive a call from Relay North Dakota, be sure to say, "Go Ahead."

If you need a brochure or have any additional questions on Relay North Dakota, please contact me at 328-3266.

REQUESTING DATA NETWORK SERVICES

Kim White

Telecommunications has developed a new form to request data network services. The Network Service Request was modeled after the Telecommunications Service Request used for telephone service. The forms can be picked up by the Customer Service area of ISD. If you can't stop by and would like them sent to you, please call the Customer Support Center at 328-3200.

If you have any suggestions on how to improve the form, please let me know. In the future, the form will be accessible through the ISD home page.



STARTING A HELP DESK

Cindy Kemmet

As technology grows and services provided to the public become more complex, some state agencies are seeing a need and the value of creating a 'Help Desk' within their agency. Help Desk services allow agencies to provide a central point of contact for their internal and external customers to report problems and request information as well as providing a problem management resolution process.

The road map to a successful Help Desk generally lies within the agency's ability to first establish an **internal process** for handling problems and then choosing the **software product** that will support those processes.

Internal Process

If you are in the process of setting up a Help Desk or are thinking of establishing one in your agency, one of the key elements you must first decide will be determining how your problem management process will work. A small sample of some of the issues you will need to consider are:

1. What is the volume of calls you anticipate will be taken at the Help Desk?
2. What is the number of Help Desk staff you will need, what skill sets should they possess, the number of working hours that will be covered, and how will after-hours calls be handled?
3. What constitutes a 'problem' that you want reported to the Help Desk?
4. Do you need an Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) setup so calls are evenly distributed among your Help Desk staff?
5. Will every problem reported be logged, tracked, resolved, and included in report measurements?
6. There needs to be an owner of the problem management process who is responsible for ensuring the process is in place and being followed. Who will be the manager in your agency responsible for this function?
7. Will you implement problem escalation procedures on problems that are not resolved in a timely manner? If so, what escalation criteria will be setup?
8. Which people or sections within your agency will be responsible for resolving those reported problems that are not resolved by the Help Desk?
9. How will those people or sections be notified of problem assignments?

Help Desk Software

ISD has been using Bendata's **HEAT** (HelpDesk Expert Automation Tool) product as our Help Desk software solution since 1994. Since then, the Attorney General's Office and the Supreme Court have also purchased licenses and are using HEAT.

In order to reduce costs to state government and help standardize on a single product, ISD has decided to utilize our Unlimited HEAT Site License and is offering to share it with other state agencies interested in implementing Help Desk services.

ISD is currently working with the Department of Transportation and Bendata to implement a shared copied of our HEAT product at the Department of Transportation's Help Desk. This is our first attempt with another agency to share the HEAT product and so far the results

have been good. ISD recently purchased the Web Link to HEAT. This will allow our customers who report a problem to track and view the status via the Web. We hope to have this implemented in the near future.

If you would like more information on how a copy of HEAT may be utilized in your agency or have any questions in general on Help Desk support, please call me at 328-3003 or email me at ckemmet@state.nd.us



“INFORMATION LINK” AVAILABLE ON THE WEB

Copies of the ISD “Information Link” are available on ISD’s web site at <http://www.state.nd.us/isd/newsindex.html>. The newsletters are in PDF format and may be viewed using Adobe’s Acrobat Reader.

ISD has set up an electronic mailing list that will notify subscribers by e-mail when new issues are available. If you prefer to be notified by e-mail rather than receive a hard copy of the newsletter, send an e-mail to Darlene Wolfgram at dwolfgra@state.nd.us. Please include your name, agency, department number (if applicable), and e-mail address.

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Anyone interested in contributing information or would like to be added to the mailing list should contact the editor at North Dakota Information Services Division, 600 East Boulevard Avenue, Bismarck, ND 58505-0100, (701) 328-3190. FAX: (701) 328-3000.

<http://www.state.nd.us/isd/>

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ANNUAL FORMS INVENTORY

Becky Lingle

Information Services Division will be issuing the annual forms inventory reports for agencies to update. Please review the list, make any necessary corrections, and return it to **Rose Kavonius at Central Services**.

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